



Hello! I'm Your Primary Nurse

This information was prepared by your nursing staff to introduce you and your family to the type of nursing care you will receive at the Clinical Center. Because you may not be familiar with the term "primary nursing," this information may answer some questions you may have about your nursing care.

What is primary nursing?

Primary nursing is a way of providing nursing care. The primary nurse is responsible for coordinating all aspects of your care during your hospital admission. The primary nursing system makes it possible to deliver patient care that is as personalized and as unified as possible. In addition to the primary nurse, associate nurses and other members of the nursing staff will also be caring for you.

It is not unusual for Clinical Center patients to have more than one primary and associate nurse. For example, a primary nurse will work with you when you come as an outpatient for clinic visits. When you are admitted as an inpatient, you will have a different primary and associate nurse on each unit to which you are admitted.

Some patient care units may have a form of creative scheduling known as "the weekend alternative." Nurses who hold these positions are part of the regular nursing staff, but they have chosen to work only on weekends. To help ensure the continuity of your

care, there will be a second associate nurse who will be designed as your "weekend associate."

What is a primary nurse?

The primary nurse is a key member of your health care team. This nurse has the following responsibilities:

- overseeing your nursing care
- discussing with you the specifics of your care and personal preferences
- working closely with your doctors and other hospital staff members to ensure that your concerns and needs are included in their treatment plans for you.

Your primary nurse will be responsible for coordinating your care throughout your hospital stay. He or she will also communicate your needs to other nursing staff members who may be caring for you.

How will I know who my primary nurse is?

You will be introduced to your primary nurse within 48 hours after admission. You will also meet your associate nurses. Your primary and associate nurses will work together to assure that your care needs are met. They will usually work with you directly when they are on duty.

What will my primary nurse do for me?

Care-giving

The goal of your primary nurse is to provide the best possible physical and

emotional support during your stay in the Clinical Center. Possessing extensive knowledge about hospital procedures and health, the primary nurse will be your resource to answer questions and to provide any other information you need. No question is too unimportant for you to ask, especially if knowing the answer will relieve your concern. Your primary nurse will always listen to what you have to say: whatever is important to you, is also important to your primary nurse.

Care planning

One of the first responsibilities of the primary nurse is to complete your nursing assessment. This assessment contains information about your general health, special problems, and any concerns you may have and would like addressed. Using this assessment, the primary nurse will make a plan of care called a "nursing care plan." The nursing care plan will be written and kept at the nurses' station. This plan helps others who may care for you to keep up-to-date on your needs and progress.

Teaching

Your primary nurse will teach you and your family about your health care needs. This may include learning about such things as new medication, a different diet, or how to apply a sterile bandage. Before you are ready to leave the hospital, it will be especially important for

you and your primary nurse to discuss how to manage your health care needs when you are home.

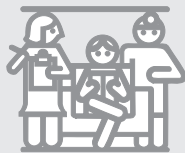
What are my responsibilities to my primary nurse?

The primary nurse-patient relationship is a special one in which both the primary nurse and you, the patient, work together to meet your health care needs.

To help your primary nurse to provide the best possible nursing care, you also have some responsibilities:

- Ask your primary nurse questions about your medications, treatments, and daily care. It is important for you to understand what is being done and why.
- Inform your primary nurse how you feel about your treatment so that any concerns can be addressed.
- Be as independent as possible so that you can participate fully in your care while you are in the hospital.
- Let your primary nurse know what you will need to care for yourself at home.
- Feel free to communicate your needs, concerns, fears, and expectations about your illness and health care.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, you can help the primary nurse work effectively with you and your family.



1998

This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Where applicable, brand names of commercial products are provided only as illustrative examples of acceptable products, and do not imply endorsement by NIH; nor does the fact that a particular brand name product is not identified imply that such product is unsatisfactory.

National Institutes of Health
Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

Questions about the Clinical Center?
OCCC@cc.nih.gov